

REQUEST MODIFICATIONS USED BY CHINESE LEARNERS AND NATIVE SPEAKERS OF THAI

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Abstract

Most interlanguage pragmatic studies in Thailand focus on learning/teaching English as a second/foreign language, while interlanguage characteristics of learners of Thai as a second language are still under-investigated. With a view to bridge this gap, this study aims to investigate the interlanguage characteristics of 51 Chinese learners of Thai (CLT) in comparison with 66 native speakers of Thai (NST) through the use of request modifications. The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) comprising 12 scenarios with the three assigned social variables relative power (P), social distance (D), and rank of imposition (R) was used to elicit the request utterances. The results reveal 20 external and 14 internal modification types used to modify the requests. Overall, it seems that CLT and NST share several request modification types; however, each group of speakers rely on some specific modification types. The mutual modification types suggest that CLT acquire pragmatic competence until they can master most modification types of request. However, the modification types which only occur in the CLT's data point out the interlanguage use of request modifications.

Keywords: Chinese learner of Thai, Interlanguage pragmatics, Request modifications

ISO 639-3 codes: tha

1 Introduction

The speech act of requests is pervasively used in daily interactions. People make a request when they want something and/or get something done (Searl, 1976). However, making a request may impose on the hearer in the way that the speaker intrudes upon the hearer's freedom by directing him/her to do something. Therefore, Brown & Levinson (1987) call it one of the most face-threatening acts (FTA).

Requests are even more difficult for the interlanguage interlocutors who lack awareness of the culture, which is embedded in language (Hsieh & Chen, 2005). A study by Lin (2009) supports that making a request as a directive, which involves the speaker's effort to get the assistance of the hearer, is one of the most difficult speech acts for learners of a language, especially for second language (L2) learners. Moreover, Hsieh & Chen (2005) found that second/foreign language learners find difficulty in performing it, particularly when it needs to be accomplished through effective use of linguistic tactics related to the underlying sociocultural norms, which may vary across languages. Besides, even high proficiency L2 learners usually make mistakes in their communication due to the lack of pragmatic knowledge (Cai & Wang 2013). Concerning L2 learners of Thai, they may transfer their native language (L1) into their performance of requests in the target language (TL). This may cause L2 learners to be too direct (authors' observation), or to use 'too many words' (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986) in requests.

Requesting can threaten the hearer's face. Therefore, in order to avoid the damaging effects of the face-threatening acts, the speaker may adopt the external and internal modifications to modify their requests. Concerning external modification, external modification is outside the request proper and indirectly modifies its pragmatic effect (Faerch & Kasper 1989). In Zhang's (1995b) study, external modification is seen as a means of negotiation, steering the course of the interaction in the direction of one's intended goal, and in the course of that, act as face-saving strategies to supply the chance for both

parties to perform a polite act. Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper (1989: 60) define internal modification as “elements within the request utterance proper (linked to the head act), the presence of which is not essential for the utterance to be potentially understood as a request”. In brief, both external and internal modifications themselves do not carry the requestive force but they mainly function to mitigate or aggravate the illocutionary force of requests. In other words, the speaker uses external and internal modifications to reduce or strengthen the intention of requests depending on the size of imposition, the hearer’s social status, and the relationship of interlocutors.

In Thailand, the studies of requests mostly focus on English as a foreign language (EFL) (see Wongwarangkul 2000; Metheeworakit & Kitprasop 2016), whereas other studies focus on the speech act of requests performed by the native speakers of Thai in comparison with the native speakers of English (see Wiroonhachaipong 2000; Raksil 2008). Some studies focus on the speech act of requests performed by the native speaker of Thai only (see Khahua 2003; Deepadung & Khamhiran 2005). However, most of them focus on the request patterns and strategies rather than the modification of requests. Therefore, the present study can bridge this research gap, as well as expanding the research area of interlanguage pragmatics in Thai.

Several universities in China have been offering Thai as a major subject for undergraduate students for decades (Kanchina, 2017). Many universities in Thailand also provide a Thai major or Thai program for Chinese undergraduate students who choose to study in Thailand (Department of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, 2010; Zhang, 2017). These Chinese students become the largest population among foreign students in Thailand’s higher education (China.com, 2014). However, to master a second/foreign language, knowledge of phonology, morphology, and syntax is not enough for the learners. It is also important to be aware of the social strategies that native speakers of a language employ (Kreuz & Roberts, 2017). In other words, pragmatic competence is suggested to introduce to the learners in classroom setting in order to use language appropriately according to the socio-cultural norms of the L2 community (Rajabia et al, 2015). The results of this study will reveal the request modifications used by the native and nonnative speakers, while at the same time suggesting the characteristics of native and nonnative speakers in the use of speech act of requests. They are also expected to assist those who learn and teach Thai as a second/foreign language with a set of natural language use in order to complement those intuitive examples found in most teaching Thai materials in the market.

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

There are the two groups of participants who involved in this study. The first group is the Chinese learners of Thai (CLT) comprising 51 participants. The second group is the native speakers of Thai (NST) with 66 participants. The total number of participants involving in this study is 117.

The Chinese participants are third-year students, majoring in Thai. They are 19-22 years old. Their language background is Mandarin Chinese. They began studying Thai at university level; by the time they participated in this study, they received two years (or four semesters) of Thai language instruction from a Chinese public university located in the southwestern region of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Their Thai courses mainly focus on vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, reading comprehension, and translation. No explicit teaching of pragmatic skills is included in the study program.

The native-speaker group consists of third- and fourth-year students, majoring in Thai at a Thai public university. Their ages range from 20 to 23 years. The NST’s data represent the native use of requests and are used as a baseline in investigating the characteristics of request modifications of CLT.

2.2 Data collection

Even though it has been criticized for its unnaturalness as the research participants are asked to respond to a pre-structured questionnaire, which allows them to take time to introspect before producing the speech act (Golato, 2003; Kasper & Roever, 2005; Ogiermann, 2009), the Discourse Completion Test

(DCT) is still one of the most commonly used data collection instrument in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (Cyluk 2013; Han 2013; Kasper & Dahl 1991). DCT allows the researcher to collect a large amount of data in relatively short time with predetermined social variables such as social power, social distance, and rank of imposition. Moreover, it facilitates the comparison of the speech act productions of CLT and NST. Therefore, it is adopted as the data collection instrument in this study.

The DCT used in this study is written in Standard Thai with open questionnaire format. It consists of two parts. In the first part, the participants were asked to fill out an information sheet to indicate their name, gender, age and native language before taking the DCT. This information was important when discussing their effects relating to the speech act of request performance but will not be discussed since it is outside the scope of the present study. The second part of DCT consists of the 12 assigned scenarios of requests. They were created based on daily conversations and previous literature on the speech act of requests in Thai (see Metheeworakit & Kitprasop 2016; Jiamwongsa 2015; Raksil 2008; Deepadung & Khamhiran 2005; Khahua 2003; Sungkaman 2001; Wiroonhachaipong 2000; Wongwarangkul 2000; Sinthuwanik, 1967). However, the DCT used in this study focuses on both close and distant relationship of speaker and hearer. In addition, the social variables adopted from Brown & Levinson (1987), i.e. social distance (D), relative power (P) and rank of imposition (R), are included in the scenarios in order to investigate their effect on the request performances. The participants were asked to respond to the DCT by imagining themselves relating to the scenarios and write their request utterances with Standard Thai in the provided space. The request scenarios used in this study are translated in English as follows.

Scenario 1: Close friend

"After school today, you're heading back to your dormitory but it's raining heavily. Your dormitory is quite far from the campus and you forgot an umbrella. You see that your close friend is going to drive back to his/her dormitory, which is the same place as yours. If you want to request a ride, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 2: Distant schoolmate

"After school today, you're heading back to your dormitory but it's raining heavily. Your dormitory is quite far from the campus and you forgot an umbrella. You see a same-year schoolmate is going to drive back to his/her dormitory, which is the same place as yours. However, you have never talked to him/her before. If you want to request for a ride, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 3: Close freshman roommate

"Today is the deadline to submit your homework. Unfortunately, you cannot go to the campus because you're very sick. You know that your freshman roommate is going to the campus. You're very close to him/her. If you want to ask him/her to submit the homework for you, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 4: Distant freshman schoolmate

"Today is the deadline to submit your homework. Unfortunately, you cannot go to the campus because you're very sick. You know that a freshman who studies in the same faculty as yours is going to the campus. You have never talked to him/her before but you recognize him/her. If you want to ask him/her to submit the homework for you, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 5: Close freshman schoolmate

"You're working on your assignment and it's almost done. Unfortunately, your computer dies. You must submit this assignment by tomorrow. Therefore, you need to take your computer for repair but the computer shop is far from your dormitory. Besides, you don't have a car now because your friend borrowed it. You know that the freshman whom you're close to has just bought a new car and s/he is not using it today. If you want to borrow his/her car, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 6: Distant freshman schoolmate

"You're working on your assignment and it's almost done. Unfortunately, your computer dies. You must submit this assignment by tomorrow. Therefore, you need to take your computer for repair but the computer shop is far from your dormitory. Besides, you don't have a car now because your friend borrowed it. You know that a freshman, who studies in the same faculty as

yours, has just bought a new car and s/he is not using it today. However, you have never talked to him/her before. If you want to borrow his/her car, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 7: Close friend

"You will have a Thai language examination tomorrow but you don't understand the lessons at all because you missed classes. You know that your close friend is good at this subject and s/he has got high scores. If you want to request tutoring regarding the whole-semester lessons, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 8: Distant schoolmate

"You will have a Thai language examination tomorrow but you don't understand the lessons at all because you missed classes. You know that one of your classmate is good at this subject and s/he has got high scores. However, you have never talked to him/her before. If you want to request tutoring regarding the whole-semester lessons, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 9: Close boss

"You work in a company. When you take a lift, you want to press for the 6th floor but you cannot do it because it is crowded. You see your boss standing near to the button. S/he is your very-close colleague. If you want him/her to press the button for you, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 10: Distant boss

"This is your first day at work in this company. When you take a lift, you want to press for the 6th floor but you cannot do it because it is crowded. You see one of your bosses standing near to the button. However, you have never talked to him/her before. If you want him/her to press the button for you, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 11: Close teacher

"You have a meeting with a professor at the campus. Unfortunately, you've just realized that today is the deadline for the tuition-fee payment. You don't have enough money to pay for it now. Anyway, you're very close to this professor. If you want to borrow 30,000 THB from him/her, what will you say to him/her?"

Scenario 12: Distant teacher

"This is your first meeting with a professor at the campus. Unfortunately, you've just realized that today is the deadline for the tuition-fee payment. You don't have enough money to pay for it now. You have never talked to this professor before. If you want to borrow 30,000 THB from him/her, what will you say to him/her?"

These scenarios and the distribution of social variables are presented in Table 1. Note that [-] represents low social variable value, [+] represents high social variable value, and [=] represents equal social variable value.

3 Results

3.1 Taxonomy of request modifications in Thai

The results reveal 24 types of request modifications found in the CLT's and NST's data. These are alerter; apology; appealer; cajoler; checking on availability; complaint; consultative device; cost minimizer; emotional onomatopoeia; disarmer; downtoner; endearment; aiming for precommitment; gratitude; grounder; conditional structures; intensifier; intertextuality; plea; promise; small talk; paralinguistic cues; sweetener; and understater.

These modification types are further categorized into external and internal modifications depending on the place of occurrence. However, this section aims at presenting the whole picture of request modification used by both groups of speakers. Therefore, the modification types found in the two data sets are presented together. In section 3.2, the frequencies of external and internal modifications used by both groups of speakers will be compared and discussed.

3.1.1. External modification types

Among the 24 types of request modifications found in the data sets, 20 of them function as external modification. They may occur before or after the head act of requests in order to mitigate or aggravate it. The details and examples are shown below. However, modification examples are underlined for reference. The meaning of additional abbreviations used in this study are stated as follows:

- OP Older person
- YP Younger person
- PP Pragmatic particle
- FPP Final politeness particle
- EXC Exclamation

3.1.1.1 Alerter

In order to get attention from the hearer, alerters are mostly used before the head act. The findings show that alerters can be further categorized into eight sub-categories as follows.

- a. *Attention getter*: Exclamations are used in order to get attention from the hearer. They are เออ /ʔəə/, เฮ้อ /ʔəə/, เฮ้อ /ʔəə/, เฮ้ย /hây/, เฮ้ย /hây/, เฮ้ย /hóoy/, เฮ้ย /hây/, เห้ย /hía/, ตายแล้ว /taay léew/.

- (1) ʔəə thâa cà khǎw tìt rót pay loŋ thûi hǎw dúay dâay máy khá
EXC COND FUT request stick car go down at dorm together can Q FPP
'Er. Can I have a ride back to the dormitory with you?'

- b. *Pronoun*: Pronouns and other terms of address indicating the social level can be used as alerters. These include ท่าน /thân/ '2 honorific', คุณ /khun/ '2 polite', เธอ /thəə/ '2 female', นาย /naay/ '2 male', แก /kæ/ '2 in-group', ตัวเอง /tuaʔeeŋ/ '2 reflexive in-group', หนู /nú/ '(mouse) 1 diminutive', ลูก /lûuk/ '(child) 2 in-group', มึง /muŋ/ '2 in-group', ไอ้ /ʔây/ '2 in-group', นี่ /nîi/ 'this', พี่รัก /thîirák/ '(beloved) sweetie'.

- (2) tuaʔeeŋ təwnnîi yûŋ mǎy khá thâa mây yûŋ chûay thópthuan rûan
2SG now busy Q FPP COND NEG busy help review topic
'Hey, you. Are you busy right now? If not, can you help me review everything'

thûi rian nay thəəm nîi tháŋmòt hây chǎn dâay mǎy
REL study in term DEM whole BEN 1SG can Q
that we have studied this term?

chăn mây maa rian mây rúu cà sòwp yanṇay
 1SG NEG come study NEG know FUT examination Q
 I did not come to class, so I don't know how to survive the exams.'

- c. *Kinship term*: In Thai society, kinship terms such as ^{น้อง} /nóng/ 'younger sibling', ^{พี่} /phii/ 'older sibling', ^{ป้า} /pâa/ 'aunt' are used as alerters in daily interactions.

(3) *pâa khá chán hòk dúay khâ*
 aunt FPP floor 6 also FPP
 'Auntie, 6th floor for me, too.'

- d. *Title*: Like kinship term, titles such as ^{อาจารย์} /câawnaay/, ^{หัวหน้า} /hŭanâa/ or ^{บอส} /bót/ for 'boss', or ^{อาจารย์} /ʔaacaan/ 'professor, instructor' and its shortened form ^{จารย์} /caan/ can be used as alerters.

(4) *câawnaay chúay kòt hòk ná khráp phóm kòt mây dáay ləəy ʔâ*
 boss help press 6 PP FPP 1SGM press NEG can PP PP
 'Boss. Help me press the 6th floor. I cannot reach it.'

- e. *Nickname*: In Thai society, people can use first names or nicknames in order to both address and get the hearer's attention. In the present study, only nicknames are found as alerters.

(5) *Kukkuu khon sŭay cǎa tiw Thai hây nõwy dì*
 [nickname] person beautiful PP tutoring Thai BEN little PP
 'Beautiful Kukkuu. Give me a some tutoring in Thai.'

kuu mây khâwcaay ləəy thuan hây nõwy ná ná ná
 1SG NEG understand PP review BEN little PP PP PP
 I don't understand the lessons at all. Give me a bit of a review, please. Please, please.'

- f. *Greeting*: The speaker can get attention from the hearer with greetings like ^{สวัสดี} /sawàtdii/ 'hello', ^{หวัดดี} /wàtdii/ 'hello (more informal)', ^{สวัสดีตอนเช้า} /sawàtdii tɔɔn cháaw/ 'good morning', and the English greetings ^{ฮัลโล} /hanlǎo/ or ^{ฮาโล} /haalǎo/ 'hello', and ^{ไฮ} /hay/ 'hi'.

(6) *haalǎo phrŭṇnii kǎw cà sòwp léew tũuntên mâak*
 Hello tomorrow also FUT examination INCH nervous much
 'Hello! Tomorrow there will be an examination already; I am very nervous.'

khun rian diidii khâ mây tǔwṇ hùan tɛe chăn mây maa rian 1 khráp
 2SG study well FPP NEG must worry but 1 SG NEG come study 1 times
 You study well; you don't need to be worried. But I missed class one time.

chăn yàak khǎw hây khwaamchũaylŭa dáay máy khâ
 1SG want request give help can Q FPP
 Can I ask for your help?

khǎw chúay thópthuan kaanrian khâ
 request help review study FPP
 Please help me with exam preparation.'

- g. *Apology*: In order to get attention from the hearer, the speaker uses an apology at the beginning of the utterance. Both formal and informal forms ขอโทษ /khǒwthôot/ and โทษ /thôot/, respectively, were used by both groups of speakers.

- (7) *khǒwthôot ná khá khǒw thǎam nǒy wǎa khǒw ʔanúyâat yuum rót khun*
excuse me PP FPP request ask little REL request permission borrow car 2SG
'Excuse me. May I ask for permission to use your car?'

hây chǎn dǎay mǎy rót chǎn hây phûan nùŋ léɛw
BEN 1SG can Q car 1SG give friend one PERF
I lent mine to a friend.

thanthii chǎn phiaŋ khêe tǒŋ rîp cháy rót khòwpkhun máak
immediately 1SG only just must hurry use car thank.you much
I need to use one right away. Thank you very much.'

- h. *Permission seeker*: The speaker can get attention from the hearer by asking for permission. Only ขออนุญาต /khǒw ʔanúyâat/ 'ask for permission' is found as permission seeker in this study.

- (8) *khǒw ʔanúyâat ná khá rópkuān chúay kòt líp chán hòk*
request permission PP FPP bother help press lift floor 6
'May I bother you to press the 6th floor'

hây dúay dǎay máy khá khòwpkhun khá
BEN also can Q FPP thank.you FPP
for me? Thank you.'

3.1.1.2 Grounder

- i. The speaker provides reason or explanation in order to support his/her request and makes it reasonable for the hearer to comply. Grounders may precede, follow, or get inserted between sequences of head acts.

- (9) *khǒwthôot ná khráp wannii phǒm mây ʔaw róm maa thûnii*
excuse.me PP FPP today 1SGM NEG take umbrella come here
'Excuse me, please. I didn't bring an umbrella today.

khǒw nǎy rót khǒw khun dǎay mǎy khráp
request sit car POSS 2SG can Q FPP
Can I get a ride with you?'

3.1.1.3 Checking on availability

Checking for whether there is a chance for compliance mostly precedes the head act.

- (10) [...] ʔəə wannii cháy rót máy
EXC today use car Q
'[junior's name]. Er, do you use your car today?

phii yuum pay ʔaw khóm nǒy dì dǎaw tǎm náamman hây
OP borrow go take computer little PP moment refill gasoline BEN
Let me borrow it for a bit to go to a computer shop. I will fuel up for you later.'

3.1.1.4 Gratitude

In order to accord with social etiquette as well as mitigating the request, the speaker ends the utterance with an expression of gratitude.

- (11) *nóɔŋ khráp khǎɔ chûay sòŋ kaanbâan hây phîi nóɔy dâay mǎy khráp*
 YP FPP request help send homework BEN OP little can Q FPP
 ‘Brother/sister, can you help me submit my homework?’

wannîi phîi mây khǎɔy sabaay ná khòɔpkhun ná nóɔŋ
 today OP NEG gradually fine PP thank you PP YP
 I am not feeling well today. Thank you, brother/sister.’

3.1.1.5 Promise

The speaker uses a promise in order to encourage the hearer to comply with the request. It helps assuring the hearer that s/he will get some benefit. According to the data, promises can be categorized into three sub-types, namely promise of action, promise of reward, and promise of forbearance. Interestingly, the speaker in the following example uses both promise of action and promise of forbearance in order to strengthen her request.

- (12) *ʔaacaan khá nûu phǎɔŋ ríu wâa wannîi tǔɔŋ càay khâathǎm*
 teacher FPP 1SGF just know COMP today must pay tuition fee
 ‘Professor, I just learned that I have to pay the tuition fee today.’

nûu lǎay triam ɲən maa mây phǔɔ
 1SG then prepare money come NEG enough
 But I don’t have enough money.

rópkuun khǎɔ yuuum ɲən ʔaacaan dâay mǎy khá léew nûu cà rîip khuun hây
 bother request borrow money teacher can Q FPP then 1SGF FUT hurry return BEN
 Can I borrow yours? I will quickly return it to you.

léɛ tǔɔpay cà mǎy kǎət rûaŋ bèɛp nîi ʔiik léew khâ
 and next FUT NEG happen matter type DEM more inCH FPP
And this won’t happen again.

3.1.1.6 Small talk

Small talk includes features such as self-introduction, greetings, and chatting. It is useful in creating social bonding in order to establish close rapport with the hearer, as well as encouraging the hearer to comply with the request.

- (13) *sawàtdii khâ khun cà klàp [...] chây mǎy khá*
 hello FPP 2SG FUT return [...] correct Q FPP
 ‘Hello. You are going back to [dormitory’s name], right?’

dichǎn kǔɔ pen náksuksǎa thîinîi mǔankan maa càak prathêet ciin
 1SGF also COP student here same come from country China
I also am a student here. I’m from China.

wannii fǒn tòk nàk tèε dīchǎn luum ʔaw rôm maa léεw
 today rain fall heavy but 1SGF forget take umbrella come already
 It's raining heavily but I forgot my umbrella.

thāa saduak khǎw klàp hǎwphák dūaykan dāay mǎy khá
 COND convenient request return dormitory together can Q FPP
 If it's convenient for you, can I go back to the dormitory with you?

3.1.1.7 Cost minimizer

In order to minimize the imposition on the hearer, the speaker mentions the cost of request.

- (14) *nǎwɔŋ dǎaw phii fàak ɲaan pay sǎw dūay dāay máy*
 YP moment OP deposit work go send also can Q
 'Younger brother/sister, can I ask you a favor to hand in my assignment?'

khǎwɔ sǎw tǎw lǎak rian rǔuu wāaŋwāaŋ kǎw dāay ná
 gradually send when finish study or available also can PP
You can do it later, after your class. Or when you are free.

phǎwɔdii raw máy sabaay ʔaa khǎwphkun mâak mâak náa
 just.now 1SG NEG fine PP thank you very very PP
 I'm not feeling well right now. Thank you very, very much.'

3.1.1.8 Sweetener

The speaker expresses appreciation of the hearer's ability to comply with the request by giving a compliment. With the use of sweeteners, the hearer gains positive face. Thus, s/he may agree to comply with the request.

- (15) *mun phrūnii tiw [wīchaa] hāy kuu nǎwɔ dì mun kèn ʔà*
 2SG tomorrow tutoring [subject] BEN 1SG little PP 2 SG smart PP
 'Dude, give me some tutoring on [subject] tomorrow. You're a genius!'

3.1.1.9 Appealer

In order to attract or stimulate the hearer regarding the head act, the speaker uses a tag-like structure.

- (16) *[chūu phūan] raw luum ʔaw rôm maa wá*
 [friend's name] 1SG forget take umbrella come PP
 '[friend's name]. I forgot to bring an umbrella.'

khǎw tìt rôt klàp hǎw pay kàp kεε dūay dāay p(l)àaw wá
 beg stick car return dormitory go with 2SG together can Q PP
 Can I get a ride back to the dormitory with you?

saduak máy ʔà
 convenient Q PP
Is it convenient for you?

3.1.1.10 Apology

In order to accord with social etiquette as well as mitigating the request, the speaker ends the utterance with an apology. The use of apologies in this category is different from its use as a subtype of alerters;

the speaker expresses his/her regret for bothering the hearer with the request, whereas the apology used as alerter mainly gets the hearer's attention. An apology is illustrated below.

- (17) *sawàtdii khâ nǒɯ khâ khǎɯ chûay phîi nǒɯ khâ phîi yàak yuum*
 hello FPP YP FPP request help OP little FPP OP want borrow
 'Hello, younger brother/sister. I need a little help.'

khǎɯ nǒɯ maa cháɯ nǒɯ nâ khâ phrǎwâa khǎɯmphiwtǎ khǎɯ phîi sǎa léew
 POSS YP come use little PP FPP because computer POSS OP broken PERF
 I 'd like to borrow your car for a while because my computer broke,

tǎɯ pay sǎɯm tɛə rǒt khǎɯ phîi thûuk phûan yuum pay léew khǎɯthǒotkhâ
 must go repair but car POSS OP PASS friend borrow go PERF sorry FPP
 and I have to get it fixed. But a friend borrowed my car. I'm sorry.

3.1.1.11 Consultative device

The speaker involves the hearer by asking for suggestions, advice, or opinions.

- (18) *ʔaacaan phrûnnîi càay khâathǎm ʔâ nǚ phǎɯ ríu tham ɲay dii ʔâ khâ*
 teacher tomorrow pay tuition fee PP 1SGF just know do how good PP FPP
 'Professor, I've just learned that the tuition fee payment is due tomorrow. What should I do?

ʔaacaan mii hây nǚ yuum máy khâ sàk 30,000
 teacher have give 1SGF borrow Q FPP about 30,000
 Do you have 30,000 THB I could borrow?'

3.1.1.12 Complaint

The speaker triggers the hearer's sympathy by complaining about the context involving the request scenario, with the hope that the hearer may agree to comply with the request. Moreover, the speaker can notify the hearer of the ensuing head act with the use of complaint.

- (19) *nǒɯ wâay pà tǎnnîi khǎɯm phîi sǎa ʔâ*
 YP available Q now computer OP broken PP
 'Brother/sister, are you free? My computer is broken.'

phaa pay sǎɯm nǒɯ dì ná ná rǒt phîi phûan yuum pay ʔâ seɲ lǎay
 bring go repair little PP PP PP car OP friend borrow go PP frustrated PP
 Take me to a computer shop please, please. A friend borrowed my car. I'm so frustrated.

3.1.1.13 Paralinguistic cues

Apart from verbal communication, the speaker specifically uses nonverbal elements such as paralinguistic cues to support his/her requests. S/he may initiate the request with some facial expressions such as looking straight and smiling at the hearer.

- (20) [Looks/smiles at hearer] *khun pen náksuǎksǎa chán pii thîi sǎam chây mǎy*
 2SG COP student floor year at 3 correct Q
 '(Looks and smiles at the hearer) You are a third-year student, right?'

mây sâap wâa khun yùu hǎophák yùu thîi [name] chây mǎy
 NEG know COMP 2SG stay dormitory stay at [name] correct Q
 I was wondering whether you live at [name of dormitory]?

thâa yùu hǎophák [name] raw klàp hǎophák dūaykan dāay mǎy khá
 COND stay dormitory [name] 1 SG return dormitory together can Q FPP
 If you live there, can I go back with you?’

3.1.1.14 Emotional onomatopoeia

The speaker may add an onomatopoeic form for crying at the end of utterance such as ๒๓ /ηεε/ or a reduplicated version as /ηεε, ηεε/ to imply that s/he is sorry to bother the hearer with the request.

- (21) *nát tiw klùm kan mǎy tiw ná ná ná dāay proot ηεε*
 appointment tutoring group RECP Q tutoring PP PP PP can please waah
 ‘Shall we make an appointment for group tutoring appointment? Tutoring, please, please, please. Please. Waah!’

3.1.1.15 Plea

It is found that the assertive particle ๒๔ /ná/ can indicate a plea following the head act. Moreover, the speaker may emphasize it via repetition up to four times, or by lengthening its vowel in different degrees to [ná:] or [ná:]. In addition, this assertive particle can be combined with a pronoun in the structure of ná + pronoun + ná in order to aggravate the request.

- (22) *muŋ muŋ kuu khǎo tít rót klàp hǎo dūay dāay plāaw wá*
 2SG 2SG 1SG request stick car return dormitory together can Q PP
 ‘Hey, dude. Can you give me a ride back to the dormitory?’

muŋ pay nǎy tòò pà kuu pay dūay ná fǒn tòk nàk sàt ʔà
 2SG go Q next Q 1SG go together PP rain fall heavy animalPP
 (Or) are you going somewhere else? Let me go with you. It’s raining really hard.

kuu luuʔm ʔaw rôm maa ná ná muŋ ná
 1SG forget take umbrella come PP PP 2SG PP
 I forgot my umbrella. Please. Please, dude. Please.’

3.1.1.16 Intertextuality

Intertextuality is an element in which the speaker borrows a text from other sources such as a famous song or slogan to support his/her request.

- (23) *[singing line from northeastern folk song] sǎy wâa sì bòò thîmkan sǎy wâa sì mii kanlékan*
klàp dūay hây
 return together EXC
 ‘Who says we will not leave each other, who says we will have each other’. Hey! Let me go back home with you.’

3.1.1.17 Endearment

The speaker may promote a close relationship among interlocutors, as well as increase the positive face of the hearer with endearment terms. When the hearer gains face, s/he may agree to comply with the request.

- (24) *ʔaacaan khǎa khuuu nǔu mii panhǎa rǔaŋ khâathǎəm khâ*
 teacher FPP COP 1SGF have problem topic tuition fee FPP
 ‘Professor. Well, I have a problem with the tuition payment.

nǔu mǎy rǔu cà tham yàaŋray dii ʔaacaan chǔay nǔu dǎay mǎy khâ
 1SGF NEG know FUT do how good teacher help 1SGF can Q FPP
 I do not know what to do now. Can you help me?

yàak rópkuān hǎy ʔaacaan càay khâathǎəm hǎy nǔu kǝn
 want bother CAUS teacher pay tuition fee BEN 1SGF before
 I’d like to bother you to pay the tuition fee for me first.

hàak nǔu mii ɲən léew cà rǔip nam maa khuuun ʔaacaan thanthii lǎy khâ
 COND 1SGF have money PERF FUT hurry take come return teacher immediately PP FPP
 Once I have money, I will return it to you right away.

nǔu sǎnyaa khǝpphrákhun ʔaacaan mǎak ná khâ rǎk ʔaacaan thiisùt lǎy
 1SGF promise thank.you teacher much PP FPP love teacher most PP
 I promise. Thank you very much, professor. (I) love you the most.’

3.1.1.18 Understater

Understatement can occur as an external or internal modification. Regarding external modification, the speaker mitigates the request by using a certain word such as ပါပဲတိယ /péepdiaw/ ‘a moment’ and ခဲ /ʔeeŋ/ ‘only’. It may precede or follow the head act.

- (25) *nǝy phii khǝ yuum rót nǝy dǎay mǎy rót khǝy phii phúan yuum pay chǎy*
 YP OP request borrow car little can Q car POSS OP friend borrow go use
 ‘Brother/sister, can I borrow your car for a while? A friend borrowed my car.

péepdiaw ʔeeŋ náa phii campen ciŋciŋ chǔay phii nǝy ná
 moment only PP OP need really help OP little PP
Only for a moment. I really need it. Help me a bit, please.’

3.1.1.19 Disarmer

The speaker acknowledges the face-threatening act caused by the request in order to prevent a possible refusal from the hearer.

- (26) *nǝy [...] phii kǝ mǎy dǎay yàak cà pradǎəm khúun rót nǝy [...] wanrêek rǝk ná*
 YP [...] OP also NEG get want FUT initiate get.on car OP [...] first.day PP PP
 ‘Brother/sister (junior’s name). I don’t purposely want to use your brand-new car.

têe wannii rót phii phúan yuum pay ʔà léew khǝm phii sǎ
 but today car YP friend borrow go PP and computer OP broken
 But a friend borrowed my car and my computer broke.

tǝy rǔip ʔaw pay sǝm phrǝ tǝy sǝŋ ɲaan phrǔŋni
 must hurry take go repair because must send work tomorrow
 I have to hurry getting it fixed because I have to hand in my assignment tomorrow.

khǎw phîi yuuum rôt pay nǎw sî
 beg OP borrow car go little PP
 Let me borrow your car for a while.'

3.1.1.20 Aiming for precommitment

The speaker tries to gain a precommitment from the hearer.

- (27) *khun mây ywɔm hěn chǎn sǎɔp tòk chây mǎy khá*
 2SG NEG want see 1SG examination fail correct Q PP
 'You don't want to see me fail the examination, do you?


lɛɛwkǎw chûay chǎn thópthuan thà
 then help 1SG review PP
 Then help me with exam preparations.'

3.1.2. Internal modification types

Among the 24 types of request modifications found in the data sets, 14 of them function as internal modifications. They embed the head act of request in order to mitigate or aggravate it. Details are described and illustrated below.

3.1.2.1. Alerter

Alerters may occur as external or internal modifications. Regarding internal modification, alerters can be divided into the six sub-types attention getter, pronoun, kinship term, title, apology, and endearment term.

- a. *Attention getter*: Only  /hây/ 'hey' is used as attention getter in the data.

- (28) [*singing line from northeastern folk song*] *sǎy wâa sî bòɔ thîmkan sǎy wâa sî mii kanlékan*
klàp dúay hây
 return together EXC
 'Who says we will not leave each other, who says we will have each other'. Hey! Let me go back home with you.'

- b. *Pronoun*: The only pronoun used as alerter in the data is  /muɯ/ '2sg in-group'.

- (29) *háy muɯ muɯ kèŋ rûaŋ níi chây pâ*
 EXC 2SG 2SG smart topic DEM correct Q
 'Hey, dude. You understand this topic well, don't you?

chûay tiw hây kuu nǎw dâay mǎy ná ná ná
 help tutoringBEN 1SG little can Q PP PP PP
 Can you give me some tutoring, please, please, please?

khuuu kuu mây khâwɔay rûaŋ níi ɔàa
 COP 1SG NEG understand topic DEM PP
 Well, I don't understand it. I missed that class.

kuu mây dâay maa wan nán chûay kuu nǎw náa muɯ
 1SG NEG get come day DEM help 1SG little PP 2SG
 Help me a bit, dude.'

- c. *Kinship term*: Some kinship terms such as ลูก /lûuk/ ‘child’, พี่ /phîi/ ‘older sibling’ and น้อง /nóng/ ‘younger sibling’ can be used as internal modification.

(30) *khǎwthót ná khráp phîi khráp khǎw chúay kòt chán hòk dāay mǎy khráp*
excuse me PP FPP OP FPP request help press floor 6 can Q FPP
‘Excuse me, brother/sister, can you press the 6th floor?’

- d. *Title*: Titles are used as alerters in order to get attention from the hearer by acknowledging their social status, such as อาจารย์ /ʔaacaan/ ‘teacher’, and หัวหน้า /hǔanâa/, เจ้านาย /cāawnaay/ or the English loanword บอส /bót/ for ‘boss’.

(31) *khǎwthót khráp chúay kòt hòk nòng dāay mǎy khráp cāawnaay khòwpkhun khráp*
excuse.me FPP help press 6 little can Q FPP boss thank.you FPP
‘Excuse me. Can you help press the 6th floor, boss? Thank you.’

- e. *Apology*: The form ขอโทษ /khǎwthót/ ‘Excuse me’ is the only apology found as an internal modification in the data.

(32) *sawàtdii khā khǎwthót ná khun kòt líp chán hòk hāy dichǎn dāay mǎy khā*
hello FPP excuse.me FPP 2SG press lift floor 6 BEN 1SGF can Q FPP
‘Hello. Excuse me, can you press the 6th floor for me?’

- f. *Endearment term*: Endearment terms such as น้องรัก /nóngrák/ ‘beloved younger brother/sister’, เพื่อนรัก /phūanrák/ ‘beloved friend’, and เพื่อนรักของกู /phūanrák khǎwng kuu/ ‘my beloved friend’ can serve as internal modifications.

(33) *muɯ pay sòɯ kaanbāan hāy kuu nòng lók-kô ʔɔ [...] chán hāa*
2SG go send homework BEN 1SG little locker teacher [...] floor 5
‘Please hand in an assignment for me at professor [name]’s locker on the 5th floor.

kuu pay mǎy wǎy chúay thii ná nòng rák
2SG go NEG able help once PP YP love
‘I can’t go. Help me this once, my beloved brother/sister’

3.1.2.2 Consultative device

The speaker may involve the hearer for his/her cooperation by asking for suggestions, advice, or opinions.

(34) *ʔaacaan khuuu nǔu mii panhǎa ɣən mǎy phǎw càay khāathǎəm*
teacher COP 2SGF have problem money NEG enough pay tuition fee
‘Profssor. Well, I have a problem. I don’t have enough money to pay the tuition fee.

cà pen ray mǎy khā thāa nǔu cà khǎw rópkuān yuum ɣən ʔaacaan
FUT COP whatQ FPP COND 2SGF FUT request bother borrow money teacher
Is it okay if I borrow

30,000 bàat maa chamrá khāathǎəm
30,000 Baht come pay tuition fee
‘30,000 THB from you to pay my tuition fee?’

3.1.2.3 Downtoner

The speaker mitigates the impact of the request on the hearer by using expressions like พอจะ /phɔ̀ɔ̀cà/ ‘adequately’; ก็พอ /kɔ̀ɔ̀phɔ̀/ ‘good enough’; ก็ได้ /kɔ̀ɔ̀dâay/ ‘just as good, okay’; บาง /bâaŋ/ ‘some’; อาจ /ʔaat/ ‘may, maybe’; and อาจจะ /ʔaatcà/ ‘may, maybe + FUT’.

- (35) *thəə thəə raw mây khɔ̀ɔ̀y khâwcaɣ wíchaa phaasǎa Thai thîi cà sɔ̀ɔ̀p*
 2SG 2SG 1SG NEG gradually understand subject language Thai which FUT examination
 ‘Hey, you. I don’t understand the Thai classes at all, and we have to take an examination

wan phrûŋnîi ləəy ʔâ thəə chúay tiw hây raw nòɔ̀y dâay mǎy
 day tomorrow PP PP 2SG help tutoring BEN 1SG little can Q
 tomorrow. Can you give me some tutoring?

raw hěn thəə tham khaŋɛn dâay dii maa talòɔ̀t ləəy
 1SG see 2SG make score can good come always PP
 I know you always get good scores.

thópthuan hây raw bèɛp sarùpsarùp kɔ̀ɔ̀ dâay
 review BEN 1SG type briefly also can
 A brief review is good enough.’

3.1.2.4 Conditional structures

The speaker uses an embedded conditional clause in order to mitigate the request. There are two subtypes, conditional clauses and conditional cost-minimizers.

- a. *Conditional clause*: The speaker uses the conditional form ถ้า /thâa/ ‘if’ in order to mitigate the request.

- (36) *khɔ̀ɔ̀prathaanthôot ná khá hũanâa A thâa Dream*
 excuse.me-FORMAL PP FPP boss [nickname] COND [own nickname] 1SG
 ‘Excuse me, boss A (boss’s nickname).

rópkuən kòt chán hòk hây nòɔ̀y dâay mǎy khá
 bother press floor 6 BEN little can Q FPP
 Is it okay if I ask you to press the 6th floor?’

- b. *Conditional cost-minimizer*: The speaker combines a conditional clause structure with a cost minimizer. The conditional clause functions as a syntactic downgrader, whereas cost minimizer mitigates the imposition on the hearer.

- (37) [...] *thâa wâaŋwâaŋ tiw hây raw nòɔ̀y sì*
 [name] COND available tutoring BEN 1SG little PP
 ‘[name], if you are free, give me some tutoring.’

3.1.2.5 Intensifier

The speaker aggravates the impact of the request by using verbal emphasis, such as จริงๆ /ciŋciŋ/ ‘really’ and อย่างสุดซึ้ง /yàaŋ sùtsúŋ/ ‘gratefully’.

- (38) *khǎwthôot ná khá ʔaacaan khuu wâa nǔu dǔatrǝn mâak lǝy ʔaacaan*
excuse.me PP FPP teacher COP COMP 2SGF be.in.trouble much PP teacher
'Excuse me, professor. Well, I am really in trouble, professor.'

phǝw cà mii mǎy khá nǔu yuum sèt cà rǐp klàp maa khuun ná khá
enough FUT have Q FPP 2SGF borrow finish FUT hurry return come give.back PP FPP
Do you have some money for me to borrow? I will quickly return it to you afterwards.

rǝpkuan cǐncǐn ná khá ʔaacaan khǝpkhun mâak khá
bother really PP FPP teacher thank.you much FPP
I really bother you, professor. Thank you very much.'

3.1.2.6 Plea

In addition to the assertive particle *นะ /ná/*, the pleas *กรุณา /karunaa/* 'please' and the English loanword *please* are used as internal modification.

- (39) *khǎwthôot khá karunaa chǔay chǎn kòt lǐp pay chǎn 6 dǎay mǎy khá khǝpkhun khá*
excuse.me FPP please help 2SGF press lift go floor 6 can Q FPP thank.you FPP
'Excuse me. Can you press the 6th floor for me, please? Thank you.'

3.1.2.7 Promise

The promise of action is used as internal modification.

- (40) *ʔaacaan khá chǎn phǎy rǔu wâa tǝwǎy càay khǎathǝm phaaynay wannǐ tǝe chǎn*
teacher FPP 1SGF just know COMP must pay tuition fee within today but 1SGF
'Professor, I have just realized that I have to pay my tuition fee today,

mii ʔǝn mǎy phǝw chǎn cuǎy yǎak yuum ʔǝn camnuan 30,000 bàat
have money NEG enough 1SGF so want borrow money amount 30,000 Baht
but I don't have enough money. So I'd like to borrow 30,000 THB from you,

càak ʔaacaan lé chǎn cà sǝn khuun phrǔnnǐ dǎay mǎy khá
from teacher and 1SGF FUT send return tomorrow can Q FPP
professor, and I will return it to you tomorrow. Is that okay?'

3.1.2.8 Understater

The speaker mitigates the request by implying that the rank of imposition is minor. This is expressed through *สัก ~ ซัก /sàk ~ sák/* 'just, about'; *อีกที /ʔiikthii/* 'one more time'; *ประมาณ /pramaan/* 'about'. Other understaters are forms for 'little' such as *น้อย /nǝy/*, *นิดหน่อย /nítnǝy/*, *นิดหนึ่ง ~ นิดนึ่ง /nítnúŋ ~ nítnuŋ/*; *หนึ่ง ~ นึ่ง /núŋ ~ nuŋ/* 'one'; forms for 'a moment' such as *แป๊บเดียว /pǝpdiaw/*, *แป๊บหนึ่ง ~ แป๊บนึ่ง /pǝpnúŋ ~ pǝpnuŋ/*, *สักครู /sàkkhrú/*; forms for 'once' such as *สักครั้ง /sàkkhrǎŋ/*, *ซักเรื่อง /sákrwǎŋ/*, *เรื่องหนึ่ง /rwǎŋnúŋ/*, *สิ่งหนึ่ง /sǐŋnúŋ/*, *ที /thii/* 'once'.

- (41) *kòt lǐp hǎy nǝy khráp bǝwt khǝpkhun khráp*
press lift BEN little FPP boss thank.you FPP
'Press the lift for me a bit, boss. Thank you.'

3.1.2.9 Appealer

The speaker attracts or stimulates the hearer with an appealer. It appears as a tag-like structure following the head act.

- (42) *nóvɔŋ nóvɔŋ phîi waan ray nóvɔŋ dì phɔw dii dǽaw*
 YP YP OP solicit what little PP enough good moment
 Brother/sister. Do me a little favor.

phîi tɔvɔŋ pay roonbaan ʔà
 OP must go hospital PP
 I have to go to the hospital.

fàak ʔaw ɲaan pay sòŋ thîi lók-kâ ʔaacaan dâay máy róp-kuan rú plàaw
 deposit take work go send at locker teacher can Q bother or not
 Can you hand in my assignment at the professor's locker? Am I bothering you?

3.1.2.10 Cajoler

The speaker may precede his/her requests with cajolers like คือ /khuu/, คือว่า /khuuwâa/ 'that is to say', and พอที /phɔt-dii/ 'just, suddenly' in order to notify the hearer of the ensuing head act. Note that these phrases function similarly to 'well' in English.

- (43) *nîi raw yuu hɔw dúaykan chây pà*
 dem 1SG stay dormitory together Q PP
 'We are staying at the same dormitory, right?'

khuu raw yàak tìt rɔt pay loŋ thîi hɔw dúay dâay máy ʔà
 COP 1SG want stick car go down at dormitory together can Q PP
Well, can I take a ride back to the dormitory with you?

fɔn man tòk nàk læy luum ʔaw rôm maa ʔik
 rain 3SG fall heavy PP forget take umbrella come more
 It's raining heavily and I forgot my umbrella.'

3.1.2.11 Cost minimizer

The speaker minimizes the impact on the hearer by mentioning the hearer's choice of time to comply with the request.

- (44) [...] *kháp cà pen ray máy thaa cà khɔw hây chûay tiw núahǎa hây*
 [...] FPP FUT COP what Q COND FUT request CAUS help tutoring content BEN
 '(friend's name). Is it okay if I ask you for help with some tutoring?'

nóvɔŋ nâ kháp tɔvɔnnǎy kɔw dâay phûan saduak máy kháp khuu raw mây
 little PP FPP when also can friend convenient Q FPP COP 1SG NEG
 It can be any time. Is it convenient for you? Well, I really don't

khâwcaŋ cɨŋcɨŋ ʔà læy yàak khɔw hây chûay tiw hây nóvɔŋ
 understand really PP then want request CAUS help tutoring BEN little
 understand the material. So I'd like to ask for some tutoring.

tɔɔn nǎy kɔɔ dāay thii phūan saduak dāay mǎy khráp
 time Q also can REL friend convenient can Q FPP.
 Anytime that is convenient for you. Is that possible?’

3.1.2.12 Intertextuality

The speaker refers to different source of information in order to support his/her request.

- (45) *sawàtdii khā ʔaacaan mii rūaŋ yàak rópkuān nòɔy ʔà khā*
 hello FPP teacher have matter want bother little PP FPP
 ‘Hello, professor. I have to ask you a small favor.

phɔɔdii nūu pay prùksǎa kàp fāay kītcaakaan náksuǎksǎa maa
 just.now 1SGF go consult with section affair student come
 I just got back from consulting with the Department of Student Affairs

kiawkàp rūaŋ khāathəəm thii tɔɔŋ càay nay wan prūŋnii
 about matter tuition fee REL must pay within day tomorrow
 about the tuition fee that I have to pay by tomorrow.

phɔɔdii mēe nūu tìt thurá ʔoon maa mǎy dāay
 just.now mother 1SGF stick business transfer come NEG can
 My mother is busy. She cannot transfer money to me.

fāay kītcaakaan náksuǎksǎa ləay nēnam maa wāa
 section affair student then suggest come COMP
The Department of Student Affairs therefore suggested that

hāy nūu maa yuuum ʔaacaanthiiprùksǎa ʔà khā
 CAUS 1SGF come borrow advisor PP FPP
 I should borrow it from you first.’

3.1.2.13 Small talk

The speaker may use small talk such as greetings, self-introduction, or invoking the common ground shared between the interlocutors in order to establish a close rapport with the hearer before making a request.

- (46) *khɔɔthoot khā khɔɔ thǎam nòɔy wāa nɔɔŋ pen náksuǎksǎa chán pii thii nùung*
 excuse.me FPP request ask little COMP YP COP student level year at one
 ‘Excuse me. I wonder whether you are a first-year student from

khɔɔŋ khaná [...] mǎy khā phii pen chán thii sām khā
 poss faculty [...] Q FPP OP COP level at three FPP
 the faculty [name]. I’m a third-year student.

wannii tɔɔŋ sòŋ kaanbāan tēe phii mǎy sabaay ʔòk pay mǎy dāay
 today must send homework but OP NEG fine exit go NEG can
 I have to hand in my assignment today but I’m not feeling well. I can’t go myself.

phîi khəəy hěn nâa nɔɔy cuŋ maa khǎɔ khwaamchûay kàp nɔɔy
 OP PST see face YP so come request help with YP
I remember seeing your face, so I come to ask for your help.

nɔɔy chûay sòŋ kaanbâan hây phîi nɔɔy dâay mǎy khá
 YP help send homework BEN OP little can Q FPP
 Can you help submit the assignment for me?’

3.1.2.14 Sweetener

The speaker expresses appreciation of the hearer's ability to comply with the request, or gives a compliment to the hearer. When the hearer gains positive face, s/he may agree to comply with the request.

(47) *phîi khá wannîi nǎu tɔɔy pay sɔɔm khɔɔmphiwtâə thîi ráan tɛə klay mâak*
 OP FPP today 1SGF must go repair computer at shop but far much
 ‘Brother/sister. Today I have get my computer fixed at a computer shop, but it’s very far.

nǎu hěn wâa phîi súu rɔt mǎy maa yuum nǎu nɔɔy dâay mǎy
 1SGF see COMP OP buy car new come borrow 1SGF Little can Q
I know that you’ve just bought a new car. Can I borrow it for a while?

3.2 Summary

To conclude, some request modifications are used both externally and internally, whereas others are restricted to either external or internal modifications. 20 of the 24 types of request modifications found in the data function as external modification, while 14 of them function as internal modifications. All of the modification types presented above are summarized according to their functions and occurrences in Table 2. The alerter is the only modification type that neither aggravates nor mitigates the request but raises the hearer’s attention regarding the upcoming head act.

Table 2: *Function and occurrence of request modifications*

Modification types	Function	Occurrence	
		External	Internal
1) Alerter	n/a	✓	✓
2) Apology	mitigating	✓	
3) Appealer	aggravating	✓	✓
4) Cajoler	mitigating		✓
5) Checking on availability	aggravating	✓	
6) Complaint	aggravating	✓	
7) Consultative device	aggravating	✓	✓
8) Cost minimizer	mitigating	✓	✓
9) Emotional onomatopoeia	mitigating	✓	
10) Disarmer	mitigating	✓	
11) Downtoner	mitigating		✓
12) Endearment	aggravating	✓	
13) Aiming for precommitment	aggravating	✓	
14) Gratitude	mitigating	✓	
15) Grounder	aggravating	✓	
16) Conditional structures	mitigating		✓
17) Intensifier	aggravating		✓
18) Intertextuality	aggravating	✓	✓
19) Plea	aggravating	✓	✓
20) Promise	aggravating	✓	✓
21) Small talk	aggravating	✓	✓
22) Paralinguistic cues	mitigating	✓	
23) Sweetener	mitigating	✓	✓
24) Understater	mitigating	✓	✓

Surprisingly, some modification types occur as both external and internal modifications, whereas others are restricted as either external or internal modification. The 10 modification types that occur as both external and internal modifications are alerter, appealer, consultative device, cost minimizer, intertextuality, plea, promise, small talk, sweetener, and understater. Another 10 modification types occur as external modifications only: apology, checking on availability, complaint, emotional onomatopoeia, disarmer, endearment, aiming for precommitment, gratitude, grounder, and paralinguistic cues. Only four modification types are restricted to internal modifications, namely cajoler, downtoner, conditional structures, and intensifier.

Concerning the external modification types, most of them are found in both groups of speakers. However, some types are used by either CLT or NST. All external modification types are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: *External modification occurrences across participant groups*

External modification types	Mutually used by CLT & NST	Specifically used by CLT	Specifically used by NST
1) Alerter:			
a. Attention getter	✓		
b. Pronoun	✓		
c. Kinship term	✓		
d. Title	✓		
e. Nickname	✓		
f. Greeting	✓		
g. Apology	✓		
h. Permission seeker			✓
2) Grounder	✓		
3) Checking on availability	✓		
4) Gratitude	✓		
5) Promise	✓		
6) Small talk	✓		
7) Cost minimizer	✓		
8) Sweetener	✓		
9) Appealer	✓		
10) Apology	✓		
11) Consultative device	✓		
12) Complaint	✓		
13) Paralinguistic cues	✓		
14) Emotional onomatopoeia			✓
15) Plea			✓
16) Intertextuality			✓
17) Endearment			✓
18) Understater			✓
19) Disarmer			✓
20) Aiming for precommitment		✓	

Table 3 shows 20 external modification types found in both groups of speakers' data: alerter, grounder, checking on availability, gratitude, promise, small talk, cost minimizer, sweetener, appealer, apology, consultative device, complaint, paralinguistic cues, emotional onomatopoeia, plea, intertextuality, endearment, understater, disarmer, aiming for precommitment.

There are 13 external modification types found in both CLT and NST, namely alerter, grounder, checking on availability, gratitude, promise, small talk, cost minimizer, sweetener, appealer, apology, consultative device, complaint, paralinguistic cues. Only six external modification types are restricted to the NST's data: emotional onomatopoeia; plea; intertextuality; endearment; understater; disarmer. Aiming for a precommitment is the only type found only in the CLT's data.

It is noticeable that only one of the sub-types of alerters, the permission seeker, is found in the NST's data only. The other seven sub-types of alerters (attention getter, pronoun, kinship term, title, nickname, greeting, apology) are found in both the CLT's and the NST's data.

Regarding the internal modifications, there are 14 types found in both groups of speakers' data. Most of them are used by both CLT and NST, whereas some are found either in the CLT's or the NST's data, as shown in table 4.

Table 4: *Internal modification occurrences across participant groups*

Internal modification types	Mutually used by CLT & NST	Specifically used by CLT	Specifically used by NST
1) Alerter:			
a. Attention getter			✓
b. Pronoun			✓
c. Kinship term	✓		
d. Title	✓		
e. Apology	✓		
f. Endearment term	✓		
2) Consultative device	✓		
3) Downtoner	✓		
4) Conditional structures:			
a. Conditional clause			✓
b. Conditional cost-minimizer	✓		
5) Intensifier	✓		
6) Plea	✓		
7) Promise	✓		
8) Understater	✓		
9) Appealer			✓
10) Cajoler			✓
11) Cost minimizer			✓
12) Intertextuality			✓
13) Small talk		✓	
14) Sweetener		✓	

There are eight internal modification types used by both CLT and NST: alerter; consultative device; downtoner; conditional cost-minimizer; intensifier; plea; promise; and understater. On the other hand, there are five internal modification types only found in the NST's data, namely appealer, cajoler, cost minimizer, conditional clause, and intertextuality, whereas only two internal modification types are found in the CLT's data, namely small talk and sweetener.

Four sub-types of alerters are used by both CLT and NST. These are kinship term, title, apology, and endearment term. The other two sub-types, attention getter and pronoun, are used by NST only.

When comparing the sub-types of alerters between external and internal modification types, it is of note that the alerter used as external modification comprises more sub-types and frequently occurs in both groups of speakers' data, more often than the internal modification alerter. However, the endearment is an emerging sub-type of alerter, which is only found as an internal modification. Finally, another internal modification type with two sub-types is the use of conditional structures. It comprises the conditional clause and conditional cost-minimizer. The latter is used by both CLT and NST, while the conditional clause is used by NST only.

3.3 Frequency of occurrence of the request modification types

The frequency of occurrence of the request modification types is worth investigating since it may suggest some interlanguage characteristics of CLT when compared to NST. In this section, the raw counts and percentage of request modification types are presented and discussed as following.

3.3.1 Frequency of occurrence of the external modification types

The results show that CLT mostly rely on alerter for 31.78% and grounder for 30.71% when they want to support their requests. The rest of external modifications are less likely used as follows: gratitude (13.86%), small talk (9.80%), promise (5.23%), checking on availability (3.98%), sweetener (3.03%), appealer (0.47%), cost minimizer (0.35%), apology (0.29%), complaint (0.23%), consultative device (0.17%), smile (0.05%), and aiming for precommitment (0.05%).

Similarly, NST mostly rely on alerter for 37.64% and grounder for 31.93%. The rest of external modifications are less likely used as follows: checking on availability (7.79%) , gratitude (6.96%), promise (6.40%), small talk (4.41%), cost minimizer (1.76%), sweetener (0.77%), appealer (0.66%), apology (0.49%), emotional onomatopoeia (0.27%), plea (0.22%), consultative device (0.22%), intertextuality (0.11%), complaint (0.11%), endearment (0.11%), understater (0.05%), disarmer (0.05%), and paralinguistic cues (0.05%).

The frequencies of external modifications found in both groups of speakers are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: *Frequency of occurrence of external modifications in CLT and NST*

External modification types	CLT		NST	
	Counts	Percentage	Counts	Percentage
1) Alerter:	534	31.78	680	37.64
a. Attention getter	3	0.17	47	2.60
b. Pronoun	16	0.95	168	9.30
c. Kinship term	123	7.32	150	8.30
d. Title	46	2.76	144	7.95
e. Nickname	23	1.36	62	3.45
f. Greeting	249	14.82	26	1.45
g. Apology	74	4.40	80	4.42
h. Permission seeker	0	0	3	0.17
2) Grounder	516	30.71	578	31.93
3) Gratitude	233	13.86	126	6.96
4) Small talk	163	9.80	80	4.41
5) Promise	88	5.23	116	6.40
6) Checking on availability	67	3.98	141	7.79
7) Sweetener	51	3.03	14	0.77
8) Appealer	8	0.47	12	0.66
9) Cost minimizer	6	0.35	32	1.76
10) Apology	5	0.29	9	0.49
11) Complaint	4	0.23	2	0.11
12) Consultative device	3	0.17	4	0.22
13) Paralinguistic cues	1	0.05	1	0.05
14) Aiming for precommitment	1	0.05	0	0
15) Emotional onomatopoeia	0	0	5	0.27
16) Plea	0	0	4	0.22
17) Endearment	0	0	2	0.11
18) Intertextuality	0	0	2	0.11
19) Disarmer	0	0	1	0.05
20) Understater	0	0	1	0.05
Total	1,680	100	1,810	100

When comparing the frequencies of external modifications found in both groups of speakers's data, results show that they mostly rely on similar external modification types as follows: grounder (CLT = 30.71%, NST = 31.93%), appealer (CLT = 0.47%, NST = 0.66%), complaint (CLT = 0.23%, NST = 0.11%), consultative device (CLT = 0.17%, NST = 0.22%), and paralinguistic cues (CLT = 0.05%, NST = 0.05%). However, CLT use alerter (CLT = 31.78%, NST = 37.64%), promise (CLT = 5.23%, NST = 6.40%), checking on availability (CLT = 3.98%, NST = 7.79%), cost minimizer (CLT = 0.35%, NST = 1.76%), and apology (CLT = 0.29%, NST = 0.49%) with a relatively lower frequency than NST. In contrast, gratitude (CLT = 13.86%, NST = 6.96%), small talk (CLT = 9.80%, NST = 4.41%), and sweetener (CLT = 3.03%, NST = 0.77%) occur with a relatively higher frequency for CLT than for NST.

Interestingly, aiming for precommitment (0.05%) is found only in the CLT's data as an external request modification; it does not exist in the NST's data. This either suggests an L1 influence or an individual style of external modification usage. In contrast, six modification types emerge from the NST's data, representing the native usage of external modifications: emotional onomatopoeia (0.27%), plea (0.22%), endearment (0.11%), intertextuality (0.11%), disarmer (0.05%), and understater (0.05%). CLT may adopt them to their requests in order to enhance their external modification usages.

3.3.2 Frequency of occurrence of internal modification types

In order to modify the head act, CLT mainly rely on understaters with 75%. The other internal modifications are less likely used: conditional structures (9.01%), plea (6.10%), alerter (4.65%), consultative device (2.32%), downtoner (1.16%), promise (0.89%), sweetener (0.58%), and small talk (0.29%). Similarly, NST mainly use understaters with 70.41% in order to modify the head act. The remaining modifications are less likely used: conditional structures (9.39%), downtoner (5.70%), consultative device (3.88%), cajoler (3.23%), plea (2.80%), alerter (2.61%), promise (0.92%), intensifier (0.46%), appealer (0.30%), cost minimizer (0.15%), and intertextuality (0.15%). The frequencies of internal modifications used by both groups of speakers are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequency of occurrence of internal modifications in CLT and NST

Internal modification types	CLT		NST	
	Counts	Percentage	Counts	Percentage
1) Understater	258	75	457	70.41
2) Conditional structures	31	9.01	61	9.39
3) Plea	21	6.10	18	2.80
4) Alerter:	16	4.65	17	2.61
a. Attention getter	0	0	1	0.15
b. Pronoun	0	0	2	0.30
c. Kinship term	11	3.20	2	0.30
d. Title	2	0.58	5	0.78
e. Apology	2	0.58	5	0.78
f. Endearment term	1	0.29	2	0.30
5) Consultative device	8	2.32	25	3.88
6) Downtoner	4	1.16	37	5.70
7) Promise	3	0.89	6	0.92
8) Sweetener	2	0.58	0	0
9) Small talk	1	0.29	0	0
10) Cajoler	0	0	21	3.23
11) Intensifier	0	0	3	0.46
12) Appealer	0	0	2	0.30
13) Cost minimizer	0	0	1	0.15
14) Intertextuality	0	0	1	0.15
Total	344	100	649	100

The data show that both CLT and NST vastly prefer understaters when it comes to internal modification of request. Regarding its frequency of occurrence, the understater outnumbers other internal modification types with 75% in the CLT's data and 70.41% in the NST's data. Concerning the second rank of internal modification types, both CLT and NST rely on conditional structures with a similar frequency rate: 9.01% in the CLT's data and 9.39% in the NST's data.

The rest of the internal modification types occur with variable rates. The CLT use plea and alerter twice as often as NST; CLT use plea and alerter with 6.10% and 4.65%, respectively, while NST use them for 2.80% and 2.61%, respectively. However, NST overtake CLT with the frequency rates of downtoners with 5.70%, consultative device with 3.88%, and promise with 0.92%, whereas CLT use them with 1.16%, 2.32%, and 0.89%, respectively. There are two internal modification types that only exist in the CLT's data, i.e. sweetener (0.58%) and small talk (0.29%). There are five internal modification types that only exist in the NST's data, namely cajoler (3.23%), intensifier (0.46%), appealer (0.30%), cost minimizer (0.15%), and intertextuality (0.15%). Again, the internal modification types which only emerge in the CLT's data point at nonnative request characteristics, while modifications that occur only in the NST's data suggest their native nature.

4. Conclusions

This study investigated the use of request modifications used by Chinese learners of Thai and native Thai speakers. The results show that there are 24 types of request modifications which play an important role as external and internal modifications (see tables 1 to 4). These request modification types found in the data broaden the findings on requests in Thai (Metheeworakit & Kitprasop, 2016; Raksil, 2008; Deepadung & Khamhira, 2005; Khahua, 2003; Sungkaman, 2001; Wiroomhachaipong, 2000; Wongwarangkul, 2000; and Sinthuwani, 1967). Moreover, it adds to the request modification classification in Blum-Kulka & Olshtain's (1984) study by identifying 11 additional external and 5 additional internal modification types, making the request modification classification universally more applicable. The additional eleven external modification types are gratitude, small talk, promise, appealer, apology, complaint, paralinguistic cues, emotional onomatopoeia, plea, endearment, and intertextuality. The additional five internal modification types are plea, promise, cajoler, appealer, and intertextuality.

The emerging modifications found in this study suggest the cultural specificity of request performances in an Asian context with its collectivistic culture. Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) define Asian interaction as high-context communication. This is found in many Asian societies who emphasize collectivistic, indirect, relationship-oriented, circular, and nonverbal communication styles.

China and Thailand are connected by land and have a very long relationship since ancient times. They, therefore, share the concepts of face and politeness involving their performances of requests. As a result, both CLT and NST emphasize the degree of social variables with the use of additional external/internal modifications of requests. It is notable that the higher the social variables relative power, social distance, and rank of imposition are, the more external and/or internal modifications are used by the speaker. This phenomenon is more likely found in Asian interaction than in western culture where there is less emphasis on these social variables when requesting (Raksil, 2008; Wiroomhachaipong, 2000).

With regard to politeness, the data show that both groups of speakers use gratitude such as ขอบคุณ /khòɔpkhun/ and ขอบใจ /khòɔpcay/ 'thank you' when ending the request. They may also use apology such as ขอโทษ /khòɔthòot/ and โทษ /thòot/ 'excuse me, sorry' to initiate the request instead of going directly to the head act. Furthermore, both groups of speakers frequently use up to four repetitions of นะ /ná/ which is an assertive particle marking a plea. Two more forms of emphasis for this particle are lengthening of the vowel, and the structure /ná/ + pronoun/ + /ná/ following the head act. The use of small talk, promise, appealer, complaint, paralinguistic cues, emotional onomatopoeia, endearment, intertextuality, and cajoler also emphasize the contextual characteristics of Chinese and Thai in daily interactions.

When closely investigating the external modifications of request used by CLT and NST, both groups of speakers show similar usages of especially the high-frequent modifications alerter and grounder. Both groups of speakers prefer to begin the request with alerters in order to get the hearer's

attention as well as alerting him/her to the upcoming head act. Concerning grounders, both groups pervasively use it throughout the data since it helps to lessen the request's abruptness or directness. Moreover, it encourages the hearer to comply with the request when the speaker provides as many reasons as possible. Besides internal modifications, both CLT and NST use understaters with extremely high frequency in order to mitigate the head act of request. The other types occur with much lower frequency rates (see Table 6).

Those external and internal modification usages indicate that the CLT have a good command of pragmatic skills; they master the use of request modifications similarly to native usage after only two years or four semesters with no previous Thai background (see details in section 2.1). We notice that the cultural features shared between Chinese and Thai are a major factor in promoting their usage of request modifications, as most modifications found in this study exist in Chinese requests as well (see Pan, 2012; Ho, 2011; Li, 2008; Zhang, 1995a, 1995b).

The results of this study contradict previous studies in the Chinese context positing that a request is one of the most difficult speech acts for beginning and even high proficiency L2 learners, who usually make mistakes in their communication due to the lack of pragmatic knowledge (Lin 2009; Cai & Wang 2013). The CLT's data further suggest that the frequently used external and internal modifications tend to be acquired more easily as they "require lower levels of pragmalinguistic competence" (Woodfield 2012: 22). Therefore, it is suggested that those frequent features should be early introduced to Thai L2 learners in order to assist in speedy acquisition of those pragmatic features.

The frequencies of external and internal modifications reveal the CLT's interlanguage request modification usages. Regarding external modifications, CLT overuse gratitude, small talk, and sweetener. On the other hand, they underuse checking on availability and cost minimizer. Frequencies show that CLT use the former features twice as often as NST, while they use checking on availability and cost minimizer only half as frequently as NST. Concerning internal modifications, the data show that CLT use pleas and alerters twice as often as NST, whereas downtoner are underused when compared to the NST's data.

The over/underuse of those external and internal modifications not only suggests the specific characteristic of the L2 learners' requests but also reveals the positive politeness tendency of Chinese culture. In other words, CLT are more likely to emphasize positive politeness in requests with external modifications (gratitude, small talk, sweetener) and internal modifications (plea and alerter). In contrast, they are less likely to emphasize the use of external modifications like checking on availability and cost minimizer, or internal modifications like downtoners. From an interlanguage point of view, it is argued that this phenomenon is due to the transfer of L1 communication patterns. Other supporting evidence for an L1 transfer are the emerging external modification aiming for precommitment and the emerging internal modifications sweetener and small talk, which both exist only in the CLT's data. However, as our data corpus relating to this phenomenon is of relatively small size, this will require further investigation.

To conclude, the investigation of request modifications used by CLT in comparison with NST shows that the learners have acquired sufficient pragmatic competence to use request modifications similarly to native speakers. The underused request modifications in the CLT's data (see Tables 5 and 6) seem to not really affect their requests since they are not frequently employed in Thai requests. In addition, the specific modifications used by NST can be introduced to the learners at a later stage since those less often used features may take more time to acquire when compared to the frequent ones. The direct introduction of pragmatic features is expected to assist learners in choice making for request strategies, as well as foster their pragmatic awareness of Thai requests.

Lastly, the results of this study are elicited by the DCT. They may not cover all aspects of the speech act of requests in daily conversations in Thai. Therefore, other research tools such as role-playing, semi-structured interview, and/or researcher's observation should be implemented in future studies in order to unearth more natural data. Additionally, certain configurations of social variables correlating with particular modification features could be examined to better our understanding of non-native patterns of external/internal modification usages. The combination of various modification types also suggests further research in this area. Finally, this study focuses only on the speech act of requests performed by Chinese learners of Thai. There are still other interlanguage pragmatic topics and other

East and Southeast Asian L2 Thai learners waiting to be investigated in order to get a broader picture of this field of study.

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